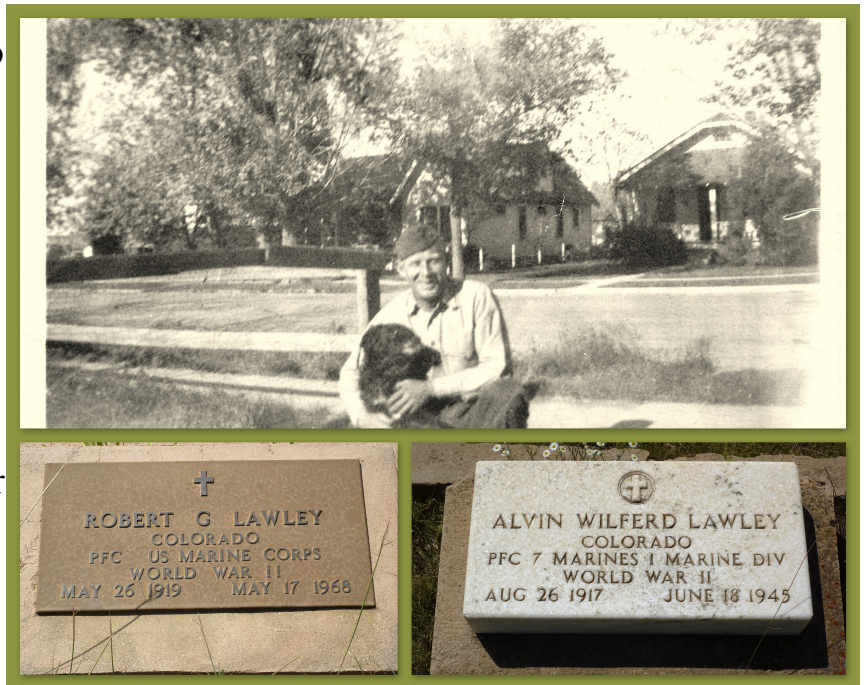


Wednesday, 8/14/2017 marks the end of WWII when Japan surrendered. In light of all the news worthy events that happen every day, it will not be surprising that one of the most significant events in US history will pass by much too silent. This makes me realize that those of us who were alive during WWII still owe the present and future generations our experiences as humble that they may be, that if not recalled now will also go silent. As a 1st grader growing up in a very small Colorado town, I knew that there was a war going on.

The big white billboard across from the Post Office reminded us daily of those who were serving from our town. People often stopped to look and were always aware of the stars beside the names of wounded and Killed in Action. This sets the stage for my story. When our family heard that Alvin Lawley was killed in action it really hit home. Bob Lawley, Alvin's brother was my Dad's best friend and he was a Marine too. It was a bright

summer day when the Marine detachment brought Alvin home to his final resting place. The Marines met with the family and shared what was appropriate regarding Alvin's brave actions. The flag draped casket was taken into the Lawley house as we all stood on the street. This scene will never leave my memory. The Marine detachment showed the highest level of respect for their fallen hero. I recall hearing the last tribute to Alvin as the sound of the 21-gun salute echoed from the cemetery.

Bob Lawley returned after the war not in the best shape. He is shown here with my dog. My Mother and Dad took him into our home and helped bring him back to a better place. Bob and my Dad spent many happy times together and I was fortunate to join them on fishing and hunting trips. There were no war stories to share, nor did there have to be, the historians do this well enough. My desire is to honor the memory of these two brave Marines, one that paid with his life and other who came home and raised a family and served the town well. I welcome this challenge to preserve these memories.



April-June 1945: Okinawa

"By April 1945, the war in Europe had ended with Allied victory, but the Pacific theater was yet to see its deadliest days. The final land battle of World War II took place a mere 350 miles from the main islands of Japan. The U.S. planned that Okinawa, once captured, would serve as a staging area for an invasion of the main islands. Okinawa saw 82 days of brutal warfare in horrific conditions at places like Kakazu Ridge, Sugar Loaf Hill and Kunishi Ridge. U.S. Marines and Army troops fought a bloody battle of attrition against an enemy concealed in intricate underground defense systems. When the island was finally secured, more than 12,000 U.S. soldiers and Navy personnel were dead or missing and more than 36,000 were wounded. Seventy thousand soldiers of the Japanese 32nd Army died on Okinawa, joined by as many as 100,000 to 150,000 civilians trapped in the crossfire".

(<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/pacific-major-battles/>)

